

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for compacting empty plastic bottles, comprising a housing or frame for receiving the bottle, an element for fixing the bottle, a heating element surrounding part of the bottle and compressing means for compacting the softened bottle, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein

- the housing or frame is constructed to receive the bottle (15) with its a mouth part upwards_i;
- the heating element (6) or ~~the~~ a part of the heating element (6) surrounding the bottle (15) is at most 60 mm high, and is arranged only around ~~the~~ a neck part of the bottle (15) in its starting position_i and_i
- the fixing element is a sealable plug (7) in the compressing means, to be fitted into the mouth of the bottle (15) and having an air channel (10).

2. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1 ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the cross section of the air channel (10) is adjustable.

3. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the compression means and the fixing element for the bottle (15) is a lid (5) moving on vertical guide bars (16).

4. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 3, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the lid (5) ~~is compressing~~ compresses the bottle (15) towards the a base of the housing, solely by its weight.

5. Cancelled

6. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 4 ~~characterized in that the lid (5) 1, wherein the compressing means includes a housing lid connected to the housing and in which the plug is mounted, and a bottle holder, which is moveable in a vertical direction in the housing, which is lifted biased upwardly by spring means, (3) and on which a bottle can be placed for movement with the bottle holder.~~

7. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ in the air channel (10) of the plug (7) is provided with flow control means.

8. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 7, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the flow control means is a valve.

9. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the diameter of at least one section of the plug (7) is adjustable.

10. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 9, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the section of adjustable diameter is an elastic rubber or plastic sleeve (9).

11. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the height of the heating element (6) is at most 60 mm.

12. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the heating element (6) is arranged in a position to surround the bottle (15) in a height of at most 60 mm.

13. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ additional mechanical compacting means for additional compacting are provided.

14. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 13, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the additional mechanical compacting means is a gear rim (18) ~~gearing that is engaged~~ in a gear rack (19) on ~~the~~ a back side of the lid for movement therewith (5), and wherein the gear rim (18) is provided with a manually operated lever.